

Nido de Lenguas: Clases

Class 1 – October 9, 2024

GOALS

- To introduce you to the town of **Laxup**, its culture, and its people
- To start using the Zapotec alphabet
- To learn some basic greetings
- To learn some words for describing people
- To find out about the annual *fiesta del pueblo*



*The town center in **Laxup** during the annual fiesta*

Workshop on the Languages of Meso-America
University of California, Santa Cruz
wlma.ucsc.edu/nidodelenguas/

1. *Laxup* (Santiago Laxopa)



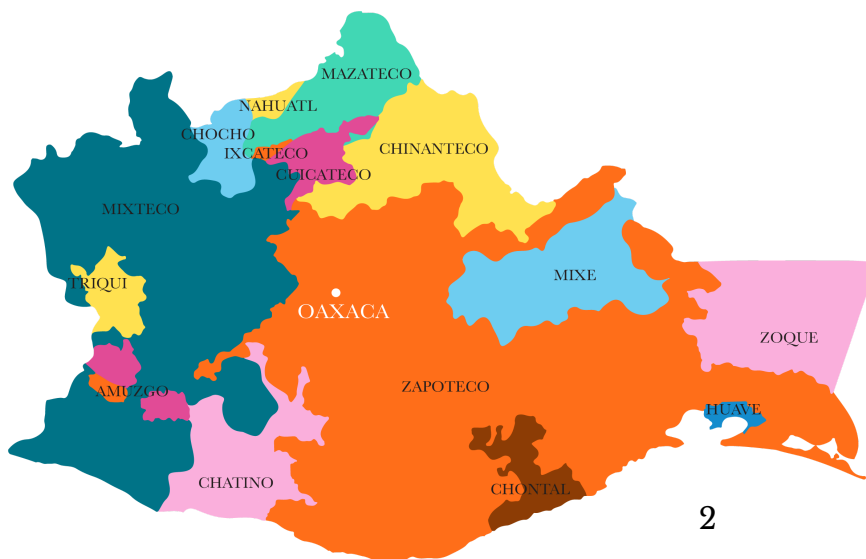
The small town of **Laxup** (Santiago Laxopa) is located high in the Sierra Juárez mountains in the Sierra Norte region of Oaxaca, Mexico.

Today, **Laxup** has about 1,500 inhabitants, most of whom speak Zapotec. Spanish is used at school and when Laxopeños travel outside the town.

Some Laxopeños have left to live in Oaxaca City, Mexico City, and Saltillo, Coahuila. They stay in touch with their families by phone, and many return to their town during the annual *fiesta del pueblo*.



The language spoken in **Laxup** is one variety of Zapotec. Other Zapotec varieties are spoken from the Sierra Norte through the Valley to the Sierra Sur and Isthmus.



The Zapotec spoken in **Laxup** is only *one* of Oaxaca's many languages. There are 15 other language groups like Zapotec in Oaxaca for a total of 854 varieties.

2. Greetings

One of the first things you need to learn when starting a language is how to greet people. First, we will learn how to greet Maestra Fe at the beginning of class.

Dialogue 1: How to start class

Fe: **Padziuxh!**

'Hello (informal)!'

Class: **Padziuxh e!**

'Hello (formal)!'

Fe: **Gak zualhe?**

'How are you all?'

Class: **Zuatu' wenh.**

'We are doing well.'

Exercise

Practice your part of Dialogue 1 with Maestra Fe.

Now, we can learn how to greet your fellow students. It is also how Laxopeños greet one another in a variety of different circumstances.

Dialogue 2: How to greet your classmates

You: **Padziuxh!**

'Hello!'

Your friend: **Padziuxh!**

'Hello!'

You: **Gak zuu'?**

'How are you?'

Your friend: **Zua' wenh.**

'I'm doing well.'

Chixhe lhe'?

'How about you?'

You: **Duxklhenu', zua' wenh.**

'Thank you, I'm doing well.'

Exercise A

Practice *both* parts of Dialogue 2 with Maestra Fe.

Exercise B

Find a classmate, and practice Dialogue 2 with them.

3. The Zapotec alphabet

Zapotec has 29 sounds: 5 vowels and 24 consonants.

Vowels

The 5 vowels are pretty much the same as in Spanish:

a e i o u

Consonants

Many of the consonants are like consonants in either English or Spanish:

b ch d dz g k l m n
p r s sh t ts w y z

But the rest of the consonants have special pronunciations in Zapotec. We won't try to master these all now, just become familiar with them.

- Some consonants have pronunciations that are very similar, *but not exactly identical* to sounds in English or Spanish:

lh	<u>lh</u> ape'	'hat'
nh	bzi' <u>inh</u>	'mouse'

For now, you can just ignore the h when it appears after an l or n.

- Some consonants are *unique* to Zapotec:

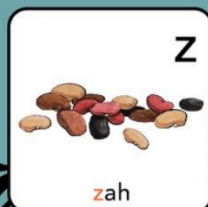
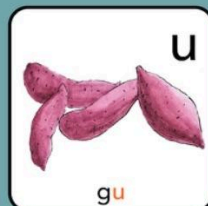
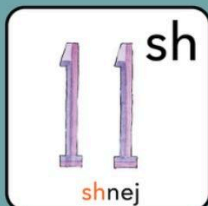
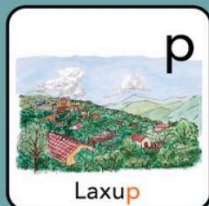
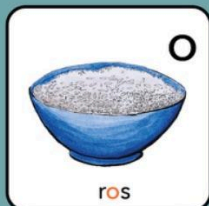
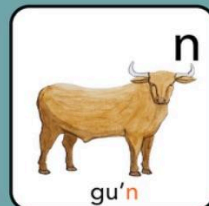
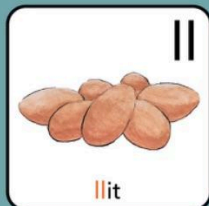
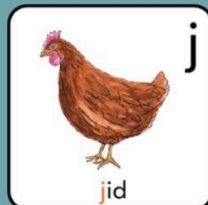
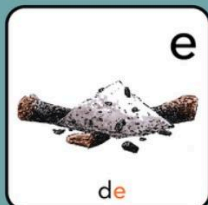
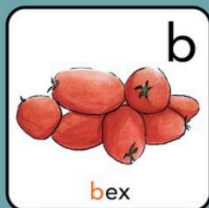
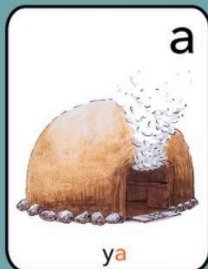
j	<u>j</u> id	'chicken'
ll	<u>ll</u> it	'egg, bone'
x	<u>x</u> uge'	'fingernail'
xh	<u>xh</u> ile'	'sheep'

Later on, we will also be learning about two other symbols — ' and h — which do not represent sounds on their own, but change how a neighboring vowel sounds.

Exercise

On the alphabet chart on the next page, repeat each word after Maestra Fe.

Xhdille'dzu, *Dille'xhunh*



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Download the alphabet poster for Zapotec here:

<https://wlma.ucsc.edu/nidodelenguas/alphabet/slz-alphabet-poster.pdf>

Print it out and hang it up at home to help you memorize all the sounds in Zapotec.

Tarjetas

Practice the Zapotec alphabet using these digital flashcards:

<https://babel.ucsc.edu/tarjetas/alphabet/>

4. Describing people

We are going to start learning how to speak Zapotec with some words for describing people. Many of these come in pairs:

bi'i nhu'ulhe	'girl'	bene' nhu'ulhe	'woman'
bi'i xyag	'boy'	bene' xyag	'man'

You'll notice that these words all have two parts. The first part describes how old a person is — **bi'i** is used for young people and **bene'** is used for adults.

Here are some other pairs of words that describe people using the same pattern:

bi'i weya'a	'dancer (younger)'	bene' weya'a	'dancer (older)'
bi'i dzul	'singer (younger)'	bene' dzul	'singer (older)'
bi'i skwel	'student'	bene' skwel	'teacher'

Exercise

Maestra Fe will show you a picture of a person. Describe them using one of the words above.

Tarjetas

Practice these words describing people using these digital flashcards:

<https://babel.ucsc.edu/tarjetas/people/>

5. Final dialogue: Arriving at the fiesta

Every year, there is a festival in **Laxup** to honor the town's patron saint, Santiago Apóstol. It lasts a week around the saint's day of July 25.

To introduce you to the culture and people of **Laxup**, we will learn a dialogue between two Laxopeños: Pedro and Raquel.

Pedro lives in Santa Cruz, but he has returned to **Laxup** for the yearly fiesta. As he enters the town walking down the main street, he sees his old friend Raquel:



Pedro: **Padziuxh, Raquel!**
'Hello, Raquel!'

Raquel: **Padziuxh! Gak zuu'?**
'Hello! How are you?'

Pedro: **Zua' wenh. Duxklhenhu'.**
'I'm well. Thank you.'

Chixhe lhe'?
'How about you?'

Raquel: **Zua' wenh.**
'I'm well.'

Pedro: **E ba dzak Ini?**
'Is the fiesta happening?'

Raquel: **O'ó, yisezeye' de'e billda'nh nelle'.**
'Yes, they are going to set off fireworks tonight.'

Pedro: **E uzalhenhu' neda' nelle'?**
'Can you come with me tonight?'

Raquel: **Chi udexhi'u neda'.**
'If you come and pick me up.'

Pedro: **Wakkse.**
'Okay.'

Raquel: **Nha' yillagdzu lla.**
'I'll see you then.'

Exercise

Listen carefully to Maestra Fe recite the dialogue above. Then repeat each sentence after her.

* * * * *

You can practice the dialogue at home by listening to the recording here:

<http://wlma.ucsc.edu/nidodelenguas/clases/2024/2024-1-dialogue.mp3>

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You can watch them set off the fireworks at this year's fiesta here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TIIdNX60oibM>

6. Homework

6.1. *Sequence.* The sentences below form a conversation, but they are out of order. Write a number next to each sentence, indicating what their correct order is.

- _____ Fe: **Zua' wenh.**
- _____ You: **Padziuxh e!**
- _____ You: **Zua' wenh. Chixhe lhe'?**
- _____ Fe: **Gak zuu'?**
- _____ Fe: **Padziuxh!**

6.2. *Complete.* Write the missing words or phrases in the conversations below.

Fe: **Padziuxh,** _____.

You: _____ **Gak zuu'?**

Fe: **Zua' wenh.** _____ ?

You: **Zua'** _____.

6.3. *New words.* The dialogue above contains the following (new) words:

wenh	'good, well'
lhe'	'you'
lni	'fiesta'
de'e billda'	'fireworks'
nelle'	'tonight'
neda'	'I, me'
wakkse	'okay'

Go back and look at how these words are used in the dialogue above.

6.4. *Memorize.* Listen to the final dialogue online several times:

<http://wlma.ucsc.edu/nidodelenguas/clases/2024/2024-1-dialogue.mp3>

Then, memorize the dialogue. Practice being both Pedro and Raquel. If you can, practice with your classmates too. We will start our next class by asking students to perform the dialogue.

6.5. *Vocabulary*. Practice the vocabulary in this lesson on your own device using the digital flashcards you can find here:

<http://wlma.ucsc.edu/nidodelenguas/tarjetas/>